لوح فاطمة (ع)

A Short Treatise on

The Tablet of Fatimah

A Divine Testimony on the Religious Authority of the Infallible Imams of the Twelver Shias.

Translation and Glosses
By Muhammad Khalfan

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THE WORLD
FEDERATION
OF KSIMC

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

اللهم صل على محمد وآل محمد

In the Name of Allah,
the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful.
O Allah, shower Your Mercy
on Muhammad and his Household

Humble Presentation

This nondescript, Muhammad, the son of late Mahmud Yusuf Khalfan and late Sakinah Muhammad Ja‘far, hereby humbly presents this work to the Lady of Light, Fatimah al-Zahra’ (‘a), whose role in struggling to return the divine leadership to its owners cannot be overlooked. May Allah make us worthy of benefitting from her intercession.

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PREFACE

PREFACE

Lawhu Fatimah (the tablet of Fatimah) or *hadith al-lawh* (the tradition of the tablet) as it is known in some scholarly circles, is one of the masterpiece documents narrated by great Shia authorities of tradition, which explicitly mentions the names of the divinely chosen trustees of religion and successors of the Holy Prophet (*s*). Unlike the well-known *Mushaf Fatimah* (the Scroll of Fatimah) which was communicated to her after the demise of the Apostle of Allah (*s*) and written by Amir al-mu'minin (*'a*),[1] the tradition of the Tablet was sent down directly in the form of an emerald-like tablet[2] to the Holy Prophet (*s*) and thereafter gifted to Fatimah (*'a*). Later, Jabir ibn 'Abdullah al-Ansari, on request, was allowed to make a copy of the same.

The gist of what this divine tablet contains is explicit information about the infallible leaders who would succeed the Holy Prophet (*s*) in his divine mission and their role, characteristics and some events that would transpire during their times. It testifies the reality that religious authority and leadership is not something that the masses can decide for themselves through popular vote or a legacy that any fallible being can leave behind for whomever he deems fit to rule. Nor is it a matter that one can entrust to an incompetent committee, most of whose members are always overcome by personal whims and inclinations. Unfortunately, the evil forces of history overruled this imperative law of reality, and brought about a chaos whose onslaughts the Muslims will continuously have to face until the reappearance of the emancipator of mankind.

Divine leadership is a responsibility whose gravity one cannot evaluate. Only the Creator of the human being can select one who deserves this station and entrust him with this grave mission.

Conjecturing that the Holy Prophet (*s*) left the entire Muslim ummah without a successor as some of the Muslims have been made to believe, is also extremely absurd. Every intelligent leader would always leave

someone competent behind in his short excursions, let alone when he knows that he is to die and be no longer among the community.

In this first edition of *The Tablet of Fatimah*, we have limited ourselves with a presentation of the English translation of the tablet and short glosses on some of its contents. We pray to Allah that in the near future, He enables us to unravel deeper secrets from the apparent import of this divine direction.

The credit of this humble attempt goes to the well-known missionary and luminary *Murabbiyah Óahirah Ahmad A.M. Ja'far* who undoubtedly has devoted her life to guide the women of our communities. Whenever I had the honour of meeting her, I always observed a zeal for knowledge emanating from her noble being. It was after her request for the translation of this divine tablet that I resolved to embark on this project.

We pray that Allah protects for us such pioneers of our Muslim communities and enable us to benefit from them as we voyage to the Absolute Perfect Being, in whose proximity one experiences utter joy and ecstasy.

Al-Safar al-Muzaffar 1430 AH
Holy Proximity of Hadrat Ma'sumah ('a)
Qum al-Muqaddasah

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION:
SOURCES OF THE TABLET

The tradition of the Tablet of Fatimah (*'a*) has been narrated by many great scholars of tradition, including the following:

1. Thiqat al-Islam Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni (d. 329 AH) in his authentic collection *Usul al-Kafi* (v.1, pp. 527-528) has narrated the tradition of the Tablet under the chapter heading *Ma ja'a fi al-ithnay 'asharah wa al-nass 'alayhim 'alayhim al-salam* (On what has come about regarding the twelve [successors] and their explicit mention, peace be unto them).

2. Abu al-Hasan 'Ali ibn Husayn ibn 'Ali al-Mas'udi (d. 346 AH) has narrated the tradition of the Tablet in his *Ithbat al-Wasiyyah* (p. 3).

3. Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn Hasan ibn Babawayh al-Qummi, famously known as Shaykh al-Saduq (d. 381 AH) has narrated the tradition of the *Lawh* in chapter twenty-eight of his work *Kamal al-din wa tamam al-ni'mah* (v.1, p. 308). He has also brought the tradition in his collection *'Uyun akhbar al-Rida ('a)* (v.1, pp. 42-45) under the chapter titled *Bab al-nusus 'ala al-Rida ('a) bi al-imamah fi jumlah al-a'immah al-ithnay 'asharah* (The chapter on explicit traditions establishing the divine leadership of Imam al-Rida (*'a*) among the twelve infallible leaders).

4. Ibn Abi Zaynab Muhammad ibn Ibrahim al-Nu'mani, a scholar of the fourth century, has narrated the tradition of the *Lawh* in his *Kitab al-ghaybah (the Book of Occultation)* (p. 62).

5. Shaykh Abu 'Abdillah Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Nu'man al-Harithi al-'Ukbari, well-known as Shaykh al-Mufid (d. 413) has brought the tradition of the *Lawh* in his *hadith* collection *al-Ikhtisas* (p. 205).

6. Shaykh Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Hasan (d. 460), well-known as Shaykh al-Óa'ifah, has narrated the tradition of the *Lawh* in his *Kitab al-ghaybah (the Book of Occultation)* (p. 9).

7. Shaykh Abu ‘Ali Ahmad ibn ‘Ali al-Óabrasi (d. 620 AH) has narrated the *hadith al-Lawh* in his well-known masterpiece *al-Ihtijaj ‘ala ahl al-lijaj* (v.1, p. 67) under the chapter *Dhikr ta‘yin al-a’immah al-tahirah ba‘d al-nabiyy wa ihtijaj Allah ta‘ala bimakanihim ‘ala kaffat al-khalq* (A mention of the explicit selection of the pure divine leaders after the Prophet (*s*) and Allah’s evidence about their station above the entire creation).

8. Shaykh Abu al-Fadl ibn Hasan al-Óabrasi (d. 548 AH) well-known as Amin al-Islam, has narrated the tradition of the Tablet from Shaykh al-Saduq in his *I‘lam al-wara* (p. 392).

9. ‘Allamah Muhammad Baqir ibn Muhammad Taqi al-Majlisi (d. 1111 AH) has narrated the tradition of the *Lawh* in his magnum opus *Bihar al-Anwar* (v.36, p. 197) from Shaykh al-Saduq, Shaykh al-Mufid, Shaykh al-Óusi, Shaykh al-Óabrasi, and Shaykh al-Nu‘mani.

10. Shaykh ‘Abdullah Bahrani Isfahani has brought the tradition of the *Lawh* in his book ‘*Awalim al-‘ulum wa al-ma‘arif wa al-ahwal* (v.3, ch. 3, pp. 66-73).

It is also important to note that the tradition of the Tablet has different versions with slight variations. The main reasons behind these differences pertains to the problems of the narration of the tradition. In this treatise, we have adopted the version depicted in the authoritative text of *Usul al-Kafi* of Thiqat al-Islam al-Kulayni.

ORIGINAL ARABIC TEXT

ORIGINAL ARABIC TEXT

مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَحْيَى وَمُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللهِ عَنْ عَبْدِ اللهِ بْنِ جَعْفَرٍ عَنِ الْحَسَنِ بْنِ ظَرِيفٍ وَعَلِيُّ بْنُ مُحَمَّدٍ عَنْ صَالِحِ بْنِ أَبِي حَمَّادٍ عَنْ بَكْرِ بْنِ صَالِحٍ عَنْ عَبْدِ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنِ سَالِمٍ عَنْ أَبِي بَصِيرٍ عَنْ أَبِي عَبْدِ اللهِ (ع) قَالَ:

قَالَ أَبِي لِجَابِرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللهِ الْأَنْصَارِيِّ: إِنَّ لِي إِلَيْكَ حَاجَةً فَمَتَى يَخِفُّ عَلَيْكَ أَنْ أَخْلُوَ بِكَ فَأَسْأَلَكَ عَنْهَا فَقَالَ لَهُ جَابِرٌ أَيَّ الْأَوْقَاتِ أَحْبَبْتَهُ فَخَلَا بِهِ فِي بَعْضِ الْأَيَّامِ فَقَالَ لَهُ يَا جَابِرُ أَخْبِرْنِي عَنِ اللَّوْحِ الَّذِي رَأَيْتَهُ فِي يَدِ أُمِّي فَاطِمَةَ (ع) بِنْتِ رَسُولِ اللهِ (ص) وَمَا أَخْبَرَتْكَ بِهِ أُمِّي أَنَّهُ فِي ذَلِكَ اللَّوْحِ مَكْتُوبٌ فَقَالَ جَابِرٌ أَشْهَدُ بِاللهِ أَنِّي دَخَلْتُ عَلَى أُمِّكَ فَاطِمَةَ (ع) فِي حَيَاةِ رَسُولِ اللهِ (ص) فَهَنَّيْتُهَا بِوِلَادَةِ الْحُسَيْنِ وَ رَأَيْتُ فِي يَدَيْهَا لَوْحاً أَخْضَرَ ظَنَنْتُ أَنَّهُ مِنْ زُمُرُّدٍ وَرَأَيْتُ فِيهِ كِتَاباً أَبْيَضَ شِبْهَ لَوْنِ الشَّمْسِ فَقُلْتُ لَهَا بِأَبِي وَأُمِّي يَا بِنْتَ

رَسُولِ اللهِ (ص) مَا هَذَا اللَّوْحُ فَقَالَتْ هَذَا لَوْحٌ أَهْدَاهُ اللهُ إِلَى رَسُولِهِ (ص) فِيهِ اسْمُ أَبِي وَاسْمُ بَعْلِي وَاسْمُ ابْنَيَّ وَاسْمُ الْأَوْصِيَاءِ مِنْ وُلْدِي وَأَعْطَانِيهِ أَبِي لِيُبَشِّرَنِي بِذَلِكَ قَالَ جَابِرٌ فَأَعْطَتْنِيهِ أُمُّكَ فَاطِمَةُ (ع) فَقَرَأْتُهُ وَاسْتَنْسَخْتُهُ فَقَالَ لَهُ أَبِي فَهَلْ لَكَ يَا جَابِرُ أَنْ تَعْرِضَهُ عَلَيَّ قَالَ نَعَمْ فَمَشَى مَعَهُ أَبِي إِلَى مَنْزِلِ جَابِرٍ فَأَخْرَجَ صَحِيفَةً مِنْ رَقٍّ فَقَالَ يَا جَابِرُ انْظُرْ فِي كِتَابِكَ لِأَقْرَأَ أَنَا عَلَيْكَ فَنَظَرَ جَابِرٌ فِي نُسْخَةٍ فَقَرَأَهُ أَبِي فَمَا خَالَفَ حَرْفٌ حَرْفاً فَقَالَ جَابِرٌ فَأَشْهَدُ بِاللهِ أَنِّي هَكَذَا رَأَيْتُهُ فِي اللَّوْحِ مَكْتُوباً

بِسْمِ اللهِ الرَّحْمنِ الرَّحِيمِ

هَذَا كِتَابٌ مِنَ اللهِ الْعَزِيزِ الْحَكِيمِ لِمُحَمَّدٍ نَبِيِّهِ وَنُورِهِ وَسَفِيرِهِ وَحِجَابِهِ وَدَلِيلِهِ نَزَلَ بِهِ الرُّوحُ الْأَمِينُ مِنْ عِنْدِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ. عَظِّمْ يَا مُحَمَّدُ أَسْمَائِي وَاشْكُرْ نَعْمَائِي وَلَاتَجْحَدْ آلَائِي إِنِّي أَنَا اللهُ لاإِلهَ إِلَّا أَنَا قَاصِمُ الْجَبَّارِينَ وَمُدِيلُ الْمَظْلُومِينَ وَدَيَّانُ الدِّينِ إِنِّي أَنَا اللهُ لاإِلهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَمَنْ رَجَا غَيْرَ فَضْلِي أَوْ خَافَ غَيْرَ عَدْلِي عَذَّبْتُهُ عَذاباً لاأُعَذِّبُهُ أَحَداً

مِنَ الْعالَمِينَ فَإِيَّايَ فَاعْبُدْ وَعَلَيَّ فَتَوَكَّلْ إِنِّي لَمْ أَبْعَثْ نَبِيّاً
فَأُكْمِلَتْ أَيَّامُهُ وَانْقَضَتْ مُدَّتُهُ إِلَّا جَعَلْتُ لَهُ وَصِيّاً وَإِنِّي
فَضَّلْتُكَ عَلَى الْأَنْبِيَاءِ وَفَضَّلْتُ وَصِيَّكَ عَلَى الْأَوْصِيَاءِ
وَأَكْرَمْتُكَ بِشِبْلَيْكَ وَسِبْطَيْكَ حَسَنٍ وَحُسَيْنٍ فَجَعَلْتُ
حَسَناً مَعْدِنَ عِلْمِي بَعْدَ انْقِضَاءِ مُدَّةِ أَبِيهِ وَجَعَلْتُ حُسَيْناً
خَازِنَ وَحْيِي وَأَكْرَمْتُهُ بِالشَّهَادَةِ وَخَتَمْتُ لَهُ بِالسَّعَادَةِ فَهُوَ
أَفْضَلُ مَنِ اسْتُشْهِدَ وَأَرْفَعُ الشُّهَدَاءِ دَرَجَةً جَعَلْتُ كَلِمَتِيَ
التَّامَّةَ مَعَهُ وَحُجَّتِيَ الْبَالِغَةَ عِنْدَهُ بِعِتْرَتِهِ أُثِيبُ وَأُعَاقِبُ
أَوَّلُهُمْ عَلِيٌّ سَيِّدُ الْعَابِدِينَ وَزَيْنُ أَوْلِيَائِيَ الْمَاضِينَ وَابْنُهُ شِبْهُ
جَدِّهِ الْمَحْمُودِ مُحَمَّدٌ الْبَاقِرُ عِلْمِي وَالْمَعْدِنُ لِحِكْمَتِي سَيَهْلِكُ

الْمُرْتَابُونَ فِي جَعْفَرٍ الرَّادُّ عَلَيْهِ كَالرَّادِّ عَلَيَّ حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي
لَأُكْرِمَنَّ مَثْوَى جَعْفَرٍ وَلَأَسُرَّنَّهُ فِي أَشْيَاعِهِ وَأَنْصَارِهِ وَأَوْلِيَائِهِ
أُتِيحَتْ بَعْدَهُ مُوسَى فِتْنَةٌ عَمْيَاءُ حِنْدِسٌ- لِأَنَّ خَيْطَ فَرْضِي
لَا يَنْقَطِعُ وَحُجَّتِي لَا تَخْفَى وَأَنَّ أَوْلِيَائِي يُسْقَوْنَ بِالْكَأْسِ
الْأَوْفَى مَنْ جَحَدَ وَاحِداً مِنْهُمْ فَقَدْ جَحَدَ نِعْمَتِي وَمَنْ غَيَّرَ
آيَةً مِنْ كِتَابِي فَقَدِ افْتَرَى عَلَيَّ وَيْلٌ لِلْمُفْتَرِينَ الْجَاحِدِينَ عِنْدَ

انْقِضَاءِ مُدَّةِ مُوسَى عَبْدِي وَحَبِيبِي وَخِيَرَتِي فِي عَلِيٍّ وَلِيِّي وَنَاصِرِي وَمَنْ أَضَعُ عَلَيْهِ أَعْبَاءَ النُّبُوَّةِ وَأَمْتَحِنُهُ بِالاضْطِلَاعِ بِهَا يَقْتُلُهُ عِفْرِيتٌ مُسْتَكْبِرٌ يُدْفَنُ فِي الْمَدِينَةِ الَّتِي بَنَاهَا الْعَبْدُ الصَّالِحُ - إِلَى جَنْبِ شَرِّ خَلْقِي حَقَّ الْقَوْلُ مِنِّي لَأَسُرَّنَّهُ بِمُحَمَّدٍ ابْنِهِ وَخَلِيفَتِهِ مِنْ بَعْدِهِ وَوَارِثِ عِلْمِهِ فَهُوَ مَعْدِنُ عِلْمِي وَمَوْضِعُ سِرِّي وَحُجَّتِي عَلَى خَلْقِي لَا يُؤْمِنُ عَبْدٌ بِهِ إِلَّا جَعَلْتُ الْجَنَّةَ مَثْوَاهُ وَشَفَّعْتُهُ فِي سَبْعِينَ مِنْ أَهْلِ بَيْتِهِ كُلُّهُمْ قَدِ اسْتَوْجَبُوا النَّارَ وَأَخْتِمُ بِالسَّعَادَةِ لِابْنِهِ عَلِيٍّ وَلِيِّي وَنَاصِرِي وَالشَّاهِدِ فِي خَلْقِي وَأَمِينِي عَلَى وَحْيِي أُخْرِجُ مِنْهُ الدَّاعِيَ إِلَى سَبِيلِي وَالْخَازِنَ لِعِلْمِيَ الْحَسَنَ وَأُكْمِلُ ذَلِكَ

بِابْنِهِ مح‌مد رَحْمَةً لِلْعَالَمِينَ عَلَيْهِ كَمَالُ مُوسَى وَبَهَاءُ عِيسَى وَصَبْرُ أَيُّوبَ فَيُذَلُّ أَوْلِيَائِي فِي زَمَانِهِ وَتُتَهَادَى رُءُوسُهُمْ كَمَا تُتَهَادَى رُءُوسُ التُّرْكِ وَالدَّيْلَمِ فَيُقْتَلُونَ وَيُحْرَقُونَ وَيَكُونُونَ خَائِفِينَ مَرْعُوبِينَ وَجِلِينَ تُصْبَغُ الْأَرْضُ بِدِمَائِهِمْ وَيَفْشُو الْوَيْلُ وَالرَّنَّةُ فِي نِسَائِهِمْ أُولَئِكَ أَوْلِيَائِي حَقّاً بِهِمْ أَدْفَعُ كُلَّ فِتْنَةٍ عَمْيَاءَ حِنْدِسٍ وَبِهِمْ أَكْشِفُ الزَّلَازِلَ وَأَدْفَعُ الْآصَارَ وَالْأَغْلَالَ أُولئِكَ عَلَيْهِمْ صَلَواتٌ مِنْ رَبِّهِمْ وَرَحْمَةٌ وَأُولئِكَ هُمُ الْمُهْتَدُونَ.

قَالَ عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ سَالِمٍ قَالَ أَبُو بَصِيرٍ لَوْ لَمْ تَسْمَعْ فِي دَهْرِكَ إِلَّا هَذَا الْحَدِيثَ لَكَفَاكَ فَصُنْهُ إِلَّا عَنْ أَهْلِه

ENGLISH TRANSLATION AND GLOSSES

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Muhammad ibn Yahyā and Muhammad ibn ‘Abdillāh narrated from ‘Abdullāh ibn Ja‘far from al-Ḥasan ibn Ẓarīf and ‘Alī ibn Muhammad from Ṣālih ibn Abī Ḥammād from Bakr ibn Ṣālih from ‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Sālim from Abū Baṣīr from Abū ‘Abdillāh al-Ṣādiq (*‘a*), who said:

My father [Imam al-Bāqir (*‘a*)] said to Jābir [ibn ‘Abdillāh al-Anṣārī]: Indeed I want something from you; when is it comfortable for you to have a private meeting, so that I may ask you about it?

Jābir said: [I am ready at] whatever time you like.

Then one day Imam al-Bāqir (*‘a*) had a private meeting with Jābir and said to him: O Jābir, inform me about the tablet (*lawh*) that you saw with my mother Fāṭimah (*‘a*), the daughter of the Apostle of Allah (*ṣ*) and what my mother informed you regarding what is written therein.

Jābir said: I bear witness and swear by Allah that I entered in the presence of your mother Fāṭimah (*‘a*) during the lifetime of the Apostle of Allah (*ṣ*) and congratulated her for the birth of [Imam] al-Ḥusayn (*‘a*) and saw in her hand a green tablet,[3] which I thought was made of emerald, and I saw that it bore [lines of] luminous writing resembling the colour of the sun.

So I said to her: May my father and mother be your ransom, O daughter of the Apostle of Allah (*ṣ*), what is this tablet?

She (*‘a*) said: This is a tablet that Allah gifted to His Apostle (*ṣ*). It contains the names of my father, my husband, my two sons, as well as the names of the divine trustees from my progeny. My father bestowed it to me to give me glad tidings about that.

Jābir said: Thereafter your mother Fāṭimah (*‘a*) presented it to me, and I read it and loved it.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (*'a*) said: My father said to Jābir: Can you read it out to me, O Jābir?

Jābir said: Yes.

Imam al-Ṣādiq (*'a*) said: So my father walked with Jābir to his house.

Thereupon he [Jābir] brought out a scroll of parchment and [my father] said [to him]: O Jābir look at your manuscript, so that I may read out [the same] to you. So Jābir looked at the manuscript and my father read it out, and there was no difference of even a letter.

Jābir said: I bear witness and swear by Allah that I saw it written as follows in the tablet:

In the Name of Allah,
the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful.[4]

This is a written message (*kitāb*)[5] from Allah,[6] the Invincible and All-Wise,[7] to Muhammad, His prophet, His light, His emissary (*safīr*), His veil (*hijāb*),[8] and His guide [to mankind], with which the trustworthy spirit[9] came down from the proximity of the Lord of the universe.[10] Venerate, O Muhammad, My names,[11] and be grateful for My blessings[12] and do not deny My bounties (*ālā'ī*)[13]; Indeed I am Allah; besides Me there is no god; I am the Breaker of tyrants, the One who renders the wronged ones as triumphant, and the One who will recompense on the Day of Recompense. Indeed I am Allah; besides Me there is no god. Whosoever is hopeful of other than My favour, or fearful of other than My justice, *I will punish him with a punishment that I would not punish anyone throughout all of creation*.[14] So obey Me alone and entrust your affairs to Me alone.

I did not send any prophet whose days were over and whose period ended save that I kept a trustee (*waṣī*) for him.[15] Indeed I made you superior to all the Prophets and made your trustee superior to all the divine trustees.

I honoured you with your two brave children[16] and two grandsons, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn.

I made Ḥasan[17] the mine of My knowledge[18] after the cessation of the period of his father,[19] and made Ḥusayn[20] the treasurer of My revelation[21] and honoured him with martyrdom[22] and concluded his [worldly] life with felicity (*sa'ādah*).[23] Hence, he is the best of those who have been martyred[24] and the most exalted of the martyrs in terms of rank. I made My complete word[25] accompany him and [kept] My conclusive proof[26] with him.

Through his progeny[27] I reward[28] and punish.[29] The first of them is ʻAlī,[30] the leader of the worshippers and the adornment of my past friends.

And [then comes] his son,[31] who resembles his praised grandfather, Muhammad, the cleaver of My knowledge[32] and the mine of My wisdom.[33]

Indeed those who are sceptical about Jaʻfar will perish.[34] One who opposes him is like one who has opposed Me. Indeed I have destined that I will surely honour the dwelling of Jaʻfar,[35] and would make him happy in his followers,[36] supporters and friends.

[After him], Mūsā [ibn Jaʻfar (*'a*)] will live at the time of a blind and dark mischief (*fitnah*)[37] because the cord of My obligations cannot be severed and My proof cannot be hidden; and indeed [the thirst of knowledge of] My close friends will be quenched with a satisfying cup (*al-ka's al-awfā*).[38]

Whosoever rejects anyone of them has indeed rejected My bounty[39] and whoever changes a verse from My book[40] has indeed fabricated a lie against Me.

Woe be unto the fabricators and repudiators of ʻAlī[41] during the end of the period of Mūsā: My obedient servant, My beloved[42] and My best of creation; [ʻAlī is] My *walī*,[43] My helper, and one on whom I will place the load of prophecy and test with knowledge regarding it. An arrogant demon[44] will murder him. He [the Imam (ʻa)] would be buried in a city[45] built by the upright servant[46] besides the most evil of my creatures.[47] I have destined that I will make him delighted with [the birth of] his son Muhammad,[48] his successor and the inheritor of his knowledge.

Therefore he is the mine of My knowledge and the receptacle of My secret and My proof over My creation. No servant would believe in him save that I will make his abode to be Paradise and make him intercede for seventy people from his household all of whom deserve Hell-Fire; and I will make prosperous the final affairs of his son ‘Alī,[49] My close servant, My helper and the witness in My creation and My trustee over My revelation.

From him I will bring out the caller of My path and the treasurer of My knowledge al-Ḥasan[50] and I will perfect that with his son *m.h.mm.d*,[51] a mercy to the worlds. He possesses the perfection of Moses[52] and the effulgence of Jesus, and the patience of Job.[53] During his time[54] My close servants would be humiliated and their necks given as gifts in the way the necks of the Turks and Daylam were given. So they would be killed and burned and would be fearful, scared, and apprehensive.[55] The earth would be stained with their blood and distress and lamentation would spread among their women. These are truly My close servants.[56] Through them I will dispel every blinding and dark mischief (*fitnah*) and through them I will remove uncertainties (*al-zalāzil*),[57] and dispel burdens and shackles.[58] *These are they on whom be abundant mercy of their Lord and these are they who are guided*.[59]

‘Abd al-Rahmān ibn Sālim said: Abū Baṣīr said: If you were not to hear during your lifetime anything except this tradition, it would be sufficient for you; therefore protect it save from the trustworthy.

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NOTES

[1] It is imperative for every Muslim to know that both the *Mushaf Fatimah* and *Lawh Fatimah* are in no ways a different version of the Qur'an in the hands of the Shia. The Wahhabi media mechanism, as has been its usual trend, tries to find every pretext to question the intact version of Islam as depicted by the Shias. Therefore, before being deceived by their contentions, the true *muhaqqiq* (researcher) and seeker of the truth must search for the reality himself from the original texts of the Shia scholars and then make a judgement.

[2] This can be understood by observing the beginning of the tradition where Jabir ibn 'Abdullah al-Ansari says that he saw an emerald-like tablet with Fatimah (*'a*) bearing lines of luminous writing.

[3] Some commentators of this tradition opine that the mention of 'green tablet' here alludes to the reality that it was an immaterial tablet from the celestial realm of *barzakh*. Mawla Fayd al-Kashani, for example, in his *al-Wafi* says: 'Green Tablet: it is as if it was from the celestial realm of purgatory (*barzakh*) and its green colour is a metonym (*kinayah*) for its (colour) being between the whiteness of the realm of *jabarut* (realm of intellects) and the blackness of the darkness of the realm of *shahadah* (realm of the seen).' [al-Kashani, *al-Wafi*, v.2, p. 298]. In short, therefore, it is possible that Jabir saw the tablet in the *barzakhi* realm with his *barzakhi* vision. Thus, it was not like the material green emerald that we commonly conceive.

[4] Beginning with the *basmalah* reveals that Allah's message is a message based on mercy, which always precedes His wrath. In the well-known supplication of the Great Armour (*al-Jawshan al-Kabir*) we address Allah as follows: *Ya man sabaqat rahmatuhu ghadabah* ("O You whose mercy precedes His wrath"). [Al-Qummi, *Mafatih al-jinan*, Du'a' al-Jawshan al-

Kabir, verse 19]. The whole document therefore must be understood in light of divine mercy.

[5] The word *kitab* which is a linguistic equivalent of the word *maktub* (something written) has also been rendered by some translators as 'document' here.

[6] 'Allah' is a proper noun which specially refers to the Absolutely Perfect Essence, who possesses all the perfections independently and solely. It is also called the all-inclusive name (*al-ism al-jami'*) of God, which comprehends all the divine names of beauty (*jamal*) and majesty (*jalal*). In simpler words, when the name Allah is mentioned it covers all other divine names under its conceptual umbrella. Some insightful scholars refer to it as the greatest name (*al-ism al-a'zam*) of God.

[7] The usage of the divine names *al-'Aziz al-Hakim* has a message to reveal. It informs us of the source, the reason, and perhaps even the goal behind the divine message. The source is from an invincible and infinite power whose works are based on wisdom. Hence whatever the document says about the successors of the Prophet (*s*) is based on divine wisdom, and will definitely transpire, even if the mischief mongers dislike it. It also hints to us the fact that in adhering to the rope of *imamah*, human beings will undoubtedly attain the attributes of *'izzah* (invincibility) and *hikmah* (wisdom). Almighty Allah in different places in the Holy Qur'an says that the Qur'an has been revealed from the Invincible and All-Wise (*al-'Aziz al-Hakim*). Examples are the following verses: 39:1, 45:2, and 46:2.

[8] The Prophet (*s*) is introduced here as the *hijab* (barrier) of Allah, which probably signifies his station of being the intermediary of divine grace. Allah created him as an intermediary who provides grace to the universe through divine permission. Hence being the mediator means being a barrier between Allah and His creation. Mawla Fayd al-Kashani endorses this view when commenting on a tradition from Imam al-Baqir (*'a*) in his exegesis of *al-Kafi* called *al-Wafi.* [al-Kashani*, al-Wafi*, v.1, p. 424].

[9] *Al-Ruh al-Amin* is a reference to angel Gabriel, the esteemed angel of divine communication. The Holy Qur'an employs this term similarly in the following verses: "*This is indeed [a Book] sent down by the Lord of all the*

worlds, brought down by the Trustworthy Spirit (al-Ruh al-Amin), upon your heart so that you may be one of the warners." (26:192-194)

[10] The fact that this document originates from God introduced here as *Rabb al-'Àlamin* reveals that it is related to God's lordship (*rububiyyah*) over and His training (*tarbiyah*) of all the inhabitants of the universe (*al-'Àlamin*). This is because the word *rabb* denotes the Creator who provides existence, maintains it, controls it and brings it to its perfection.

[11] It must be understood that *divine names* do not always signify mere vocalisations or their equivalent written letters, nor the meanings reflected in the minds of those who pronounce them. In Qur'anic terminology, a name is an essence (*dhat*) with a perfect attribute (*sifah*). For example when we call *al-Rahman* we are calling the Absolute Perfect Being who has the attribute of mercy. In simple words, *the All-Merciful Being* is what we call a name (*ism*). And it is such a name that makes every entity appear, and provides the seeker of mercy with mercy.

[12] The phrase *washkur na'ma'i* ("and be grateful for My blessings") does not simply signify the vocalisation and pronunciation of thanks. *Shukr*, in its true meaning, is to employ Allah's bounty for the purpose it was created. Hence, when one employs his five senses for the fundamental purposes they were created, he is actually thanking Allah and being grateful to Him. In reality the word *shukr* literally means 'to unveil' (*kashf*). And when Allah's bounty is employed for sinful purposes it does not reveal itself as a bounty, and hence instead of unveiling it as a bounty it veils it. And this actually is the literal meaning of *kufr*, which literally means 'to veil' (*al-satr*).

[13] This statement resembles what is mentioned in chapter *al-Rahman*, where Almighty Allah enumerates several of His bounties and then addressing the jinn and human beings says: *Fa bi-ayyi ala'i Rabbi-kuma tukadhdhiban?* ("So which of your Lord's bounties will you both deny") (55:13). After reciting the verse *Fadhkuru ala' Allah la'allakum tuflihun* ("So remember Allah's bounties so that you may be felicitous") (7:69) Imam al-Sadiq (*'a*) is reported to have said: 'Do you known what are *ala' Allah* (Allah's bounties)?' He [Abu Yusuf Bazzaz, who was near the Imam] said: 'No.' He (*'a*) said: 'It is the greatest of divine blessings over His

creation, and that is our guardianship (*wilayatuna*).' [Sayyid Hashim Bahrani, *al-Burhan fi tafsir al-Qur'an*, v.2, p. 560].

[14] The Holy Qur'an refers to this kind of punishment with regard to those who were ungrateful after Allah sent down a banquet of heavenly food for Prophet 'Ïsa (*'a*) and his close companions. The Holy Qur'an says: "*Allah said, 'I will indeed send it down to you. But should any of you disbelieve after this, I will indeed punish him with a punishment such as I do not punish anyone in all creation'."* (5:115). Perhaps the divine favour (*fadl*) spoken about in this expression is the favour of *wilayah* and *imamah*, which indeed is a divine favour of unequalled uniqueness. Those who are ungrateful regarding this blessing will suffer such a punishment that has no equal. Obviously they are those who despite knowing the truth of the *imamah* of the infallible Imams (*'a*), reject them due to having been overcome by their whims and base inclinations. None of the acts of such people are accepted and they are the people of Hell. We have ample traditions that clearly inform us of such kinds of people.

[15] This is a divine universal principle. There was always a successor and trustee designated for a prophet before his demise. This is also completely in line with the intellect. Those, therefore, who conjecture that the Holy Prophet (*s*) did not convey Allah's message with regard to his successor before his demise, are misled and must be guided before they waste their energy and effort to live a proper life of faith. The Holy Qur'an mentions a group of people who think that they are doing good, but are actually wasting their time and energy: "*Those whose striving goes astray in the present life, while they think that they are working good deeds*." (18:104)

[16] The word employed in the original text is *shiblayk* which literally signifies 'your two cubs' which alludes to their brave character.

[17] The word *hasan* means 'something delightful and desirable' [Al-Isfahani, *al-Mufradat fi gharib al-Qur'an*, p. 235]. And if the human being has retained his untainted human disposition, exalted values will naturally delight him. The name Hasan reveals both the apparent and hidden reality of Imam al-Hasan (*'a*). This is because the Imam (*'a*) was well-known for his glowing face [which is desirable and delightful to the senses], and being the vicegerent of Allah on earth during his time, he epitomised all the

beautiful attributes of Allah (which are desirable and delightful to the untainted human spirit). Hence he was and is *hasan* in the perfect and truest sense of the word. In a tradition narrated from the Holy Prophet (*s*) we are told the following: "If the intellect was [embodied] as a man, indeed it would be al-Hasan (*'a*)." [al-Hamadani, *al-Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Óalib ('a)*, p. 717]. In another tradition the Holy Prophet (*s*) is reported to have said: "Al-Hasan was named *hasan* because it was through divine favour (*ihsan*) that the heavens and the earth stood (*li-anna bi ihsanillah qamat al-samawat wa al-ard*), and 'al-Hasan' is derived from the word *ihsan* (lit., "to do good")." [Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani, *Hilyat al-abrar*, v.4, p. 20]. In another interesting tradition narrated from the Holy Prophet (*s*) he is reported to have said: "Indeed I named these two sons of mine with names of the two sons of Harun: *Shabbar* and *Shabbir*." [Shaykh al-Saduq, *'Ilal al-sharayi'*, v.1, p. 138]. Again, the Holy Prophet (*s*) is reported to have said: "Harun named his two sons, Shabbar and Shabbir, and indeed I named my two sons al-Hasan and al-Husayn [as Harun named his two sons]." [Ibn Shahr Àshub, *Manaqib 'Àl Abi Óalib ('a)*, v.3, p. 397].

[18] This reveals that Imam al-Hasan (*'a*) was the station of all kinds of divine knowledge possible for a perfect human being of his calibre. Although the word *ma'din* is rendered as 'mine', its literal import is *markazu kulli shay'* ("the station of everything") [Ibn al-Athir, *al-Nihayah*, v.3, p. 192]. It is from the word *'adana* which means "it/he stayed". In reality, all the Imams (*'a*) are the stations (*ma'adin*) of divine knowledge. In a beautiful supplication narrated from Imam al-Sajjad (*'a*) we are taught to say *Wa ja'altahum ma'adin li 'ilmik* ("And You [O God] made them [i.e. Your very close servants] the mines of Your knowledge"). [Shaykh al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, v.6, p. 507].

[19] A reference to Amir al-mu'minin 'Ali ibn Abi Óalib (*'a*) whose period of authority ended with his martyrdom on the twenty-first of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

[20] The name Husayn is a diminutive (*musaghghar*) of the name Hasan. It gives the same implication of beauty of the apparent and the hidden. In a comprehensive tradition narrated in *Madinat ma'ajiz al-a'immah*, Gabriel tells the Holy Prophet (*s*) after the birth of Imam al-Husayn (*'a*) as follows: "Convey Fatimah, your daughter, my greeting, and tell her to name him [i.e.

her newborn] ‘al-Husayn’, for indeed Allah, the Majestic, has named him so, and surely he was named al-Husayn because there was no one during his time more beautiful than him in complexion” (… *wa innama summiya al-Husayn li-anna-hu lam yakun fi zamanihi ahsan minhu wajhan*). [Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani, *Madinat ma‘ajiz al-‘aimmah al-ithnay ‘asharah*, v.3, p. 429].

[21] Imam al-Husayn (*‘a*) was indeed the treasurer of divine revelation, for he epitomised the Holy Qur’an and his entire movement unfolded the practical commentary of the Qur’an. In not submitting to the tyrant of his time and in sacrificing himself for the emancipation of mankind, he safeguarded the Qur’an and presented its reality intact. Hence he served as a trustworthy treasurer of the revelation.

[22] The literal import of *akramtu-hu* is “I made him great.” Hence it means here that Imam al-Husayn (*‘a*) attained a specific greatness (*karamah*) through martyrdom. In a lengthy tradition narrated by Shaykh al-Saduq in his *al-Amali*, the Holy Prophet (*s*) appears in the dream of Imam al-Husayn (*‘a*) before the latter begins his uprising and leaves Medina, and tells him: “Indeed you have in Paradise stations (*darajat*) that you shall not attain save through martyrdom.” [Shaykh al-Saduq, *Al-Amali*, p. 152]. In the well-known salutation of the fortieth day after the martyrdom of Imam al-Husayn (*‘a*) we are taught by Imam al-Sadiq (*‘a*) to say: *Akramta-hu bi al-shahadah wa habawtahu bi al-sa‘adah* (“You [O Allah] honoured him with martyrdom and gave him felicity”). [Shaykh ibn al-Mashhadi, *al-Mazar al-kabir*, p. 514].

[23] Perhaps this refers to the satisfaction and happiness of Imam al-Husayn (*‘a*) in being able to undergo the greatest of trials of mankind with submission, steadfastness and love. One of the well-known dictums of Imam al-Husayn (*‘a*) on his way to Karbala was: “Indeed I do not see death save as felicity (*sa‘adah*) nor life with wrongdoers save displeasure (*baraman*).” [Sayyid Radi al-Din ibn Óawus, *al-Luhuf ‘ala qatla al-tufuf*, p. 79].

[24] This is a reference to his level of martyrdom, which was the greatest. He is known as *Sayyid al-Shuhada’* (the Doyen of Martyrs) for all times. All the martyrs have to sit before his banquet of martyrdom, acquire the

essential lesson of sacrifice, and resolve to sacrifice their lives in the most adequate way.

[25] ‘Allamah Majlisi in his *Mir’at al-‘uqul* commenting on the complete word (*al-kalimah al-tammah*) says: “*Al-kalimah al-tammah* either refers to the great divine names or the knowledge of Qur’an or something more comprehensive than that and other branches of divine knowledge and divine teachings, or it refers to the divine proofs who will appear in his loin … or what is meant by the [complete] word is imamate and its conditions.” [‘Allamah Majlisi, *Mir’at al-‘uqul*, v.6, p. 211].

[26] ‘Allamah Majlisi commenting on the phrase *hujjati al-balighah* (“My conclusive proof”) in his *Mir’at al-‘uqul* says: “Conclusive or perfect proofs are proofs that Allah and His Apostle established on the truth of his imamate and the imamate of his children, or the miracles that He gave them or the true religion or accepted faith.” [‘Allamah Majlisi, *Mir’at al-‘uqul*, v.6, p. 212].

[27] ‘Allamah Majlisi in his *Mir’at al-‘uqul* commenting on the phrase *bi ‘itratihi* says that it means *bi wilayatihim wa al-iqrar bi imamatihim* (“through their guardianship (*wilayah*) and confession of their divine leadership”). [‘Allamah Majlisi, *Mir’at al-‘uqul*, v.6, p. 212].

[28] Mentioning the reason behind this, ‘Allamah Majlisi in his *Mir’at al-‘uqul* says: “Because it is the greatest pillar of faith and a condition of the acceptance of the rest of deeds.” [Allamah Majlisi, *Mir’at al-‘uqul*, v.6, p. 212].

[29] ‘Allamah Majlisi says: “And by abandoning their guardianship one would be punished due to … the deeds they performed due to not observing the condition [of *wilayah*].” [Allamah Majlisi, *Mir’at al-‘uqul*, v.6, p. 212].

[30] A reference to Imam ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn Zayn al-‘Àbidin (*‘a*). Linguistically, the name ‘Ali is a very majestic name. It reveals continual and abundant loftiness. Imam al-Husayn (*‘a*) loved to keep the name ‘Ali for all his sons. In a tradition it is reported that Yazid says to Imam ‘Ali Zayn al-‘Àbidin (*‘a*): “I am surprised at your father; He has named [one of his sons as] ‘Ali, and [then another] ‘Ali [again]?” Imam (*‘a*) replied:

“Indeed my father loved his father [‘Ali (*‘a*)], and thus named [his children] with his name a number of times.” [Ibn Shahr Àshub, *Manaqib Àl Abi Óalib (‘a)*, v.3, p. 309]. In another encounter narrated in *al-Kafi*, Marwan ibn al-Hakam who was chosen as the governor of Medina during Mu‘awiyah’s time, said to Imam ‘Ali Zayn al-‘Àbidin (*‘a*): “What is your name?” The Imam replied: “‘Ali ibn al-Husayn (*‘a*).” So he said: “What is the name of your brother?” The Imam (*‘a*) replied: “‘Ali.” So Marwan retorted: “‘Ali and ‘Ali? Does your father not want to leave any of his sons save that he keeps his name ‘Ali?” Later, Imam Zayn al-‘Àbidin (*‘a*) narrates this incident to his father Imam al-Husayn (*‘a*), who says: “Woe be upon the product of al-Zarqa’ … If a hundred sons were born to me I would have loved not to name any of them save with the name ‘Ali.” [Shaykh al-Kulayni, *al-Kafi*, v.6, p. 19].

[31] A reference to Imam al-Baqir (*‘a*) who was also known as Muhammad (lit., “the most praised”) like his grandfather the Holy Prophet (*s*). The insightful scholars believe that all the infallible Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (*‘a*) enjoy the Muhammadan station. In a lengthy tradition of Imam ‘Ali (*‘a*) the Imam (*‘a*) is reported to have said: “The first among us is Muhammad, the last among us is Muhammad, the middle among us is Muhammad, and all of us are Muhammad; therefore do not differentiate between us.” [‘Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, v.26, p. 6].

[32] Imam al-Baqir (*‘a*) is introduced here as the cleaver of divine knowledge. The word *baqir* comes from the word *baqara* which means *shaqqa* (“to cleave”). Jabir ibn Yazid al-Ju‘fi is once asked as to why Imam al-Baqir (*‘a*) was known as *baqir*, and he replied as follows: “This is because he cleft knowledge, a cleaving” (*Li annahu baqara al-‘ilma baqran*). [Shaykh al-Saduq, *‘Ilal al-sharayi‘*, v.1, p. 233].

[33] This is also endorsed by the well-known *Ziyarat al-jami‘ah al-kabirah* narrated by Imam al-Hadi (*‘a*), wherein we address the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt as follows: “Peace be unto … *the mines of the wisdom of Allah*…” [‘Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, v.99, p. 128].

[34] A good example is that of Abu Hanifah who after having learned Islamic jurisprudence from Imam Ja‘far al-Sadiq (*‘a*), abandoned the Imam (*‘a*), got deviated, created his own branch of legal rulings, and was the

source of misleading so many Muslims. In a lengthy tradition Abu Hanifah is reported to have said: "Were it not for the two years [with Imam al-Sadiq (*'a*)] Nu'man [i.e. Abu Hanifah] would have perished." Imam al-Sadiq (*'a*) is reported to have warned him one day in the following way: "Beware of two characteristics, because of which those who perished, perished: beware of giving rulings to the people according to your own opinion, and believing in what you do not know." ['Allamah Majlisi, *Bihar al-anwar*, v.2, p. 16].

[35] Commenting on the phrase *La-ukrimanna mathwa Ja'far* ("Indeed I will honour the dwelling of Ja'far") 'Allamah Majlisi in his *Mir'at al-'uqul* says that it probably means Allah will honour the lofty status of Imam al-Sadiq (*'a*) in the world through the appearance of his knowledge and merit over the people. ['Allamah Majlisi, *Mir'at al-'uqul*, v.6, p. 212].

[36] This probably refers to their great number, abundant knowledge, worldly detachment, and other merits.

[37] After the demise of Imam al-Sadiq (*'a*), some of the followers of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (*'a*) became divided due to misjudgement or disobedience. One such group is called al-Nawusiyyah from the name of its leader 'Abdullah ibn Nawus. This group believed that Imam al-Sadiq (*'a*) had not died and will live until he reappears and fills the world with justice in the way it would be filled with injustice; they believed he was the one who will rise (*al-Qa'im*). To establish their contention they would refer to a tradition from a man called 'Anbasah ibn Mus'ab who said that Imam al-Sadiq (*'a*) said: "If a person comes to you and informs you that he has given me the major ablution of death and clad me with a shroud and buried me, then do not believe in him."

Another group believed that Imam al-Sadiq (*'a*) had died but had explicitly chosen his son Isma'il ibn Ja'far as the Imam after him and that he is the one who will rise (*al-Qa'im*). This group denied the death of Isma'il ibn Ja'far which had really transpired before the demise of Imam al-Sadiq (*'a*). Another faction after the demise of Imam al-Sadiq (*'a*) was the Qaramitah or Mubarakiyyah. A group of them contended that Isma'il ibn Ja'far had passed away during the time of his father, but before his demise he chose his son Muhammad ibn Isma'il as his successor. Hence the latter [i.e.

Muhammad ibn Isma‘il] is the Imam after Isma‘il. Another group however said that Muhammad ibn Isma‘il was chosen explicitly as the Imam by Imam al-Sadiq (*‘a*) himself and not Isma‘il ibn Ja‘far. The reason for this, they believe, is that it was obligatory on Imam al-Sadiq (*‘a*) to do that because Muhammad ibn Isma‘il really deserved to be the Imam after his father more than any other person, and because imamate cannot exist in two brothers after Imam al-Hasan and Imam al-Husayn (*‘a*). The aforementioned three groups are termed as the Isma‘iliyyah because of their claim of the imamate of Isma‘il ibn Ja‘far.

Another group who deviated from the straight path was the Shamtiyyah who believed that Imam al-Sadiq (‘a) had passed away and the Imam after him was his son Muhammad ibn Ja‘far. They were known as al-Shamtiyyah from one of its adherents called Yahya ibn Abi al-Shamt. History informs us of yet another group called al-Fatahiyyah who believed that the Imam after Imam al-Sadiq (*‘a*) is his son ‘Abdullah ibn Ja‘far. They believed this as he was the eldest of the Imam’s sons. They claimed the following tradition from Imam al-Sadiq (*‘a*): “Imamate does not take place except in the eldest from the sons of the Imam.” The reason why this group was known as Fatahiyyah was due to their leader ‘Abdullah ibn Aftah. [Shaykh al-Mufid, *al-Fusul al-mukhtarah*, pp. 305-306].

Another probability of what the *fitnah* refers to is what happened during and after Imam al-Kazim (*‘a*)’s demise. The atrocities and imprisonment that the Imam (*‘a*) had to face, and the deviation of a group of Shias, called al-Waqifiyyah (those who stopped at Musa ibn Ja‘far), after his demise, who believed that Imam Musa ibn Ja‘far (*‘a*) still lived and that he is the mahdi. ‘Allamah Majlisi alludes to this probability in his *Mir’at al-‘uqul*. [‘Allamah Majlisi, *Mir’at al-‘uqul*, v.6, pp. 213-214].

[38] The Holy Qur’an says: *If they are steadfast on the path [of Allah], We shall provide them with abundant water.* (72:16). Commenting on this, Imam al-Baqir (‘a) is reported to have said: “If they are steadfast on the guardianship of ‘Ali ibn Abi Óalib (*‘a*) Commander of the faithful, and the successors (*awsiya’*) from his progeny and accept to obey them in their command and prohibition, we shall quench their hearts with faith.” [Sayyid Hashim al-Bahrani, *al-Burhan fi tafsir al-Qur’an*, v.5, p. 508].

[39] Commenting on the verse *Thumma latus'alunna yawma'idhin 'an al-na'im* ("Then, that day, you will surely be questioned concerning the great bounty") (102:8), Imam al-Sadiq (*'a*) is reported to have said: *Nahnu min al-na'im* ("We are from the great bounty"). [Shaykh al-Bahrani, *al-Burhan fi tafsir al-Qur'an*, p. 671].

[40] Changing a verse does not always mean trying to alter the words or letters of the verse. It also means changing its true meaning and misinterpreting it to what one desires. However, as Allah clearly tells us in the Holy Qur'an, He has sent the book down and it is He who will protect it. Therefore while a faction of those who have fallen into the pit of the pleasures of the world would try to misinterpret the verses of the book, the true guardians would always be steadfast in safeguarding and uttering the truth.

[41] A reference to Imam 'Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (*'a*). In the version of the tablet narrated by Shaykh al-Saduq there is a statement worthy of mention: *Ala inna al-mukadhdhiba bi al-Thamin mukadhdhibun bi kulli awliya'i* ("Indeed one who rejects the eighth [proof] rejects all my close servants"). [Shaykh al-Saduq, *Kamal al-din wa tamam al-ni'mah*, v.1, p. 310]. This signifies the importance of the eighth link of imamate which is epitomised in Imam al-Rida (*'a*). Indeed whichever Shia believes in the eighth Imam has believed in all the rest of the Imams as well.

[42] The word *habib* which is in the linguistic from *fa'il*, signifies both the active as well as passive meaning. In simple words, we can translate *habib* as both "My lover" (*muhibbi*) as well as "My beloved" (*mahbubi*).

[43] Here the word *wali* can be rendered as a close servant (*al-qarib*). Its plural which is *awliya'* is employed to denote the close servants or friends of Allah. However it can also signify guardianship, and thus when Allah says "My *wali*" He means "One whom I have designated as a guardian over mankind."

[44] The word *'ifrit* signifies a satanic personality. Al-Mazandarani in his *Sharh usul al-kafi*, commenting on the phrase *yaqtuluhu 'ifrit* ("an *'ifrit* will murder him") says: "*'ifrit* is a person who is wicked, cunning, extremely evil, very oppressive, and satanic." [al-Mazandarani, *Sharh usul al-kafi*, v.7,

p. 365]. Here it refers to Ma'mun al-Rashid, son of Harun al-Rashid, who was extremely deceiving and tried to coerce Imam al-Rida (*'a*) to be his heir apparent for his own selfish interest of safeguarding his government. The term *'ifrit* reveals that Ma'mun's inner form was actually metamorphosed and transformed into a satanic human. The scholars of insight (*ahl al-ma'rifah*) opine that the human being can undergo an inner metamorphosis (*al-tanasukh al-malakuti*) and transform into one of the following four forms: (a) human beast (who is extremely fond of eating and mating), (b) human predator (who is extremely given to anger and murder), (c) satanic human (who is extremely deceiving), and (d) angelic human (who renders his intellect over his passions and anger, and is more sublime than the angels).

[45] A reference to the city of Óus, which today is known as the city of Mashhad or Mashhad al-Rida (*'a*), in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

[46] In the version of the tradition of the tablet narrated by Shaykh al-Saduq in his *Kamal al-din*, the name of the upright servant is mentioned as *Dhu al-Qarnayn* [Shaykh al-Saduq, *Kamal al-din wa tamam al-ni'mah*, v.1, p. 310] who according to some scholars may refer to Cyrus the Great.

[47] Most evil of God's creatures here refers to Harun al-Rashid, who carried out lots of atrocities upon Imam al-Kazim (*'a*) and his followers.

[48]A reference to the ninth Holy Imam, Muhammad ibn 'Ali al-Jawad (*'a*) who revealed his excellence at a very tender age.

[49] A reference to the tenth Holy Imam, 'Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi al-Naqi (*'a*).

[50] A reference to the eleventh Holy Imam, al-Hasan al-'Askari (*'a*).

[51] These letters signify the name of the Holy Prophet (*s*), but here they refer to the twelfth Holy Imam (*'a*) who is also introduced like the Holy Prophet (s) as *Rahmatan li al-'Àlamin*. The Holy Qur'an says: *We did not send you [O Muhammad] but as Rahmatan li al-'Àlamin* (*a mercy to all the nations).* (21:107)

[52] Commenting on the phrase *kamalu Musa*, ‘Allamah al-Majlisi in his *Mir’at al-‘uqul* says: “The perfection of Musa is his knowledge, character, or his power in dispelling the ruse of the enemies.” [‘Allamah Majlisi, *Mir’at al-‘uqul*, v.6, p. 215].

[53] This reveals the towering patience that our twelfth Holy Imam (*‘a*) enjoys. The incident of Prophet Ayyub (*‘a*) is clear in the Holy Qur’an and the story of his patience is outstanding.

[54] This refers to the time preceding the reappearance of Imam al-Mahdi (*‘a*), when the true believers would have to face great difficulties and they would never waver.

[55] Perhaps this is a reference to the massacre of Sufyani who will plunder and kill the true believers.

[56] This reveals how tense the situation will be for the close servants of Allah (*awliya’ Allah*) during the time of our twelfth Holy Imam (*‘a*).

[57] Although the word *zalazil* is the plural of *zilzal* which means earthquake, it also signifies the states of inner uncertainty. The Holy Qur’an employs *zilzal* in a similar meaning; consider the following verse: *Do you suppose that you shall enter paradise though there has not yet come to you the like of what befell who went before you? Stress and distress befell them and they were convulsed (wa zulzilu) until the Apostle and the faithful who were with him said,* “*When will Allah’s help [come]?” Look! Allah’s help is indeed near!* (2:214)

[58] The Holy Qur’an speaks about true believers of the Holy Prophet (s) as follows: Those who follow the Apostle, the uninstructed prophet, whose mention they find written with them in the Torah and the Evangel, who bids them to do what is right and forbids them from what is wrong, makes lawful to them all the good things and forbids them from all vicious things, and relieves them of their burdens and the shackles that were upon them; those who believe in him, honour him, and help him and follow the light that has been sent down with him, they are the felicitous. (7:157). The close servants during the time of Imam al-Mahdi (‘a) would be so powerful in their belief

and obedience that akin to the Prophet (s) they would also relieve the people of their burdens and shackles.

[59] An allusion to verse 2:157 of the Holy Qur'an where Allah says: *It is they who receive the blessings of their Lord and [His] mercy, and it is they who are the [rightly] guided.* (2:157). This verse is a concluding statement for those who have been tested by Allah and are extremely forbearing and steadfast. They are people who are always focused on their fundamental goal, and hence cannot be wavered. Their motto in times of affliction and trial is *Indeed we belong to Allah and to Him do we return* thus acknowledging the following two fundamental realities: (1) They have nothing of their own; absolute ownership is Allah's while they are manifestations of His attributes, and (2) The ultimate goal and destination is Allah. It is also important to know that by stating *Inna ilayhi raji'un* they reveal their active constant movement to Allah. They are not those who waste their time, but value each and every moment of their lives and are focused to attain the proximity of their beloved. May Allah bestow us with such succour. Al-Mazandarani in his comments of the phrase *These are they on whom be abundant mercy of their Lord* says that it referred to the verses 2:155-156 where Allah speaks about a people who are faced with afflictions but remain patient and steadfast. Then al-Mazandarani says: "Because there is no calamity greater than the absence of the Imam (*'a*) and his occultation" (*idh la musibata a'zamu min faqd al-imam wa ghaybatihi*). [Al-Mazandarani, *Sharh usul al-kafi*, v.7, p. 366].